

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5507

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USCOMSOLANT

INFO CNO WASHDC

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DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 5839

NOFORN

JOINT EMBASSY/USDAO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, UY

SUBJ: URUGUAYAN NAVY PARTICIPATION IN UNITAS XIX

REF: A. USCOMSOLANT 161730Z DEC 77 (NOTAL)

B. USDAO MONTEVIDEO 161815Z NOV 77 (NOTAL)

C. USCOMSOLANT 021800Z NOV 77

1. THIS IS A JOINT EMBASSY/DAO MONTEVIDEO RESPONSE
TO REF A REQUEST FOR AMPLIFICATION OF EMBASSY VIEWS ON SUBJECT.

2. SUMMARY. WE FEEL VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT VADM MARQUEZ, URNAV
CINC, PRESENTLY IS DISPOSED TO DECLINE PARTICIPATION IN
UNITAS XIX IF SUCH AN INVITATION WERE TO BE EXTENDED. GIVEN
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THIS ASSESSMENT, THE CURRENT GENERALLY TROUBLED STATE OF OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS (TO WHICH MARQUEZ HAS CONTRIBUTED PERSONALLY)
AND OTHER POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE AMBASSADOR WISHES
AT THIS TIME TO WITHHOLD ANY APPROACH TO URNAV REGARDING ITS
PARTICIAPTION. END SUMMARY.

3. AS REPORTED REF B, MARQUEZ INDICATED TO OUR DATT/ALUSNA ON

15 NOVEMBER, THAT HE WAS TENDING AWAY FROM URNAV PARTICIPATION IN THE '78 UNITAS, COMPLAINING THAT THE UNITAS SVIII EXERCISE HAD BEEN A WASTE OF MONEY AND EFFORT FOR THE URUGUAYANS AND BLAMING THEIR POOR PERFORMANCE ON THE MISMATCH BETWEEN URNAV'S OLD, SLOW DE'S AND THE U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINE. WE ALSO NOTED AT THAT TIME THAT MARQUEZ HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A WEEK-LONG VISIT TO ARGENTINA AND WE SPECULATED THAT THE ARGENTINES, ANTICIPATING THEIR OWN NON-PARTICIPATION IN UNITAS NEXT YEAR, MAY HAVE PRESSED MARQUEZ TO JOIN THEM IN OPTING OUT FOR UNITAS XIX.

4. ALUSNA HAD ANOTHER CONVERSATION WITH MARQUEZ ON 19 DEC 77 THAT DEALT AGAIN WITH UNITAS XIX. IN THIS LATEST EXCHANGE, MARQUEZ STATED MORE CALMLY THAT WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE MATERIEL AND TRAINING SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. NAVY, HIS SHIPS AND CREWS WERE SIMPLY NOT PREPARED FOR JOINT EXERCISES WITH THE MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED U.S. NAVY UNITS. FURTHERMORE, THEIR POOR PERFORMANCE WAS HUMILIATING AND DETRIMENTAL TO THE MORALE OF URNAV PARTICIPATING CREWS. HE ALSO CITED THE POOR CONDITION OF HIS ANTIQUATED SHIPS, INCLUDING THE LACK OF SONAR IN R.O.U. URUGUAY (DE-1), WHICH MAKES IT REALLY FUTILE FOR THEM TO TRY TO CONDUCT ASW EXERCISES WITH NUCLEAR SUBMARINES FOR WHICH THEY ARE NO LONGER EQUIPPED. IN SHORT, HE SAID, UNITAS NO LONGER SERVED THE PURPOSE FOR URUGUAY THAT IT HAD SERVED IN YEARS PAST. HE LAMENTED BREAKING THIS STRONG (ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING) LINK WITH THE U.S. NAVY, BUT PHILOSOPHIZED THAT ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS TO RECOGNIZE REALITY, NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL, AND TO ON FROM THERE.

5. MARQUEZ IS QUITE CORRECT IN HIS ASSESSMENT OF HIS NAVY'S DECLINING CAPABILITIES, AS EVIDENCED BY URUGUAY'S POOR PERFORMANCE IN UNITAS XVIII, REPORTED IN REF C. MOREOVER, THEIR CAPABILITIES ARE CERTAIN TO DETERIORATE WITHOUT U.S. HELP, WHICH IS CERTAINLY NOT FORESEEABLE IN TIME TO PREPARE FOR UNITAS XIX. THEREFORE, MARQUEZ HAS SOUND OPERATIONAL REASONS FOR DECLINING AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN UNITAS IN 1978 AND WE ARE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD DO SO, IF THE INVITATION WERE EXTENDED.

6. THERE ARE ALSO POLITICAL FACTORS AT PLAY WHICH GIVE MARQUEZ ADDITIONAL IMPETUS TO REJECT AN INVITATION FOR UNITAS XIX. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE URNAV IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO PRESSURE FROM THE ARGENTINES WHO WILL NO DOUBT SEEK TO HAVE URUGUAY JOIN THEM IN BOYCOTTING UNITAS IF ARGENTINA CONTINUES TO DO SO. MARQUES IS ALSO QUITE CAPABLE OF EXPLOITING OUR INVITATION AND OSTENSIBLY PRESENTING HIS REFUSAL TO EXERCISE WITH THE U.S. NAVY AS A PROTEST AGAINST AND REJECTION OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WITH RESPECT TO URUGUAY. DURING THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED

VISIT TO URUGUAY BY LT. GEN. MC AULIFFE, COMMANDER, US SOUTHCOM, MARQUEZ WAS THE MOST VOCAL OF THE URUGUAYAN FLAG OFFICERS IN LEADING THE ATTACK, OFTEN VITUPERATIVE IN TONE, AGAINST GEN. MC AULIFFE AND THE U.S. MILITARY FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED A TALENT FOR DEMOGOGUERY, CONFUSING THE ISSUES AND DESTROYING ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE. WE THEREFORE DO NOT WISH TO GIVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER INSULT US AND PARTICULARLY TO PORTRAY THE USG AS THE REJECTED, ARDENT SUITOR.

7. IN VIEW OF ALL OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE AMBASSADOR HAS DECIDED THAT FOR THE TIME BEING WE SHOULD NOT APPROACH THE URNAV CONCERNING UNITAS XIX. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS HAMPERS USCOMSOLANT PLANNING FOR UNITAS NEXT YEAR, BUT BELIEVE THAT OUR
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ONLY COURSE AT THE PRESENT TIME IS TO RECOMMEND THAT YOU PROCEED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT URUGUAY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN UNITAS XIX.
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